

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JOHANN 00604 181638Z

53

ACTION AF-18

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R 181010Z JUN 74 ZFD

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3317

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0604

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: BIG WAGE INCREASES IN IRON, STEEL, ENGINEERING &
METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYERS AND OF TEN TRADE UNIONS REPRESENTING ABOUT 70,000 WHITE, COLOURED, AND INDIAN WORKERS (PLUS CHAIRMAN OF CENTRAL BANTU LABOUR BOARD SPEAKING FOR ABOUT 280,000 UNORGANIZED BLACKS) HAVE NEGOTIATED NEW INDUSTRY-WIDE WAGE AGREEMENT IN CONTEXT OF NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL FOR IRON, STEEL, ENGINEERING AND METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY.

2. AGREEMENT RAISES MINIMUM WAGE FOR BLACKS FROM 32 TO 39 CENTS PER HOUR (OR FROM R64.00 TO R78.00 PER MONTH) AND MINIMUM WAGE FOR ARTISANS FROM R1.41 TO R1.61 PER HOUR.

3. SPECULATION IS THAT EMPLOYERS INITIATED NEGOTIATIONS MORE THAN SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF DECEMBER EXPIRATION DATE OF PRESENT AGREEMENT BECAUSE THEY WERE AWARE OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT BLACK DISSATISFACTION WITH SHRINKING PURCHASING POWER OF PRESENT WAGES AND WANTED TO REACH
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PAGE 02 JOHANN 00604 181638Z

NEW AGREEMENT BEFORE COST OF LIVING WENT EVEN HIGHER.

4. COMMENT: IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT, WHILE NEW AGREEMENT
RAISES BLACK MINIMUM WAGE ALMOST TO POVERTY DATUM LINE, IT
ALSO WIDENS ALREADY LARGE WAGE GAP BETWEEN UNORGANIZED
BLACKS AND UNIONIZED WHITES, COLOURED AND INDIANS.
DEGRACE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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